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FM AMCONSUL LAGOS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6712
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA IMMEDIATE 6979
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE 0084
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 0132
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR IMMEDIATE 0695
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0567
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE 0106
RUEPGDA/USEUCOM JIC VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000327

SIPDIS

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STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/02/2016
TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [KHLs](#) [PINR](#) [ETRD](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: HOSTAGE-TAKING, SITREP # 16

REF: LAGOS 324

Classified By: Political Chief Russell Hanks
for reasons 1.4 (D/E).

Hostage Welfare Update

¶1. (C) AmCit Macon Hawkins safely departed Nigeria for Houston, Texas. There has been no additional information about the condition of the remaining hostages, except for reports yesterday confirming they were well-fed and well-treated.

¶2. (C) Willbros requested Delta State Governor Ibori deliver letters from the families of the three remaining hostages to them. However, based on accounts from the released hostages, we are doubtful that letters sent by Willbros through Delta State government will actually be delivered to them.

Hostage Debrief Update

¶3. (C) Hawkins said the hostages wanted a more long-term solution to economic and social development in their communities. He said the hostages were aware such a solution would take several months to years. He, along with the other five hostages that were de-briefed by the FBI, said there were between 60-100 militants in the hostage camp, that they rotated shifts, and that youths were entering the camp to train and drill with the militants. They observed that the militants celebrated whenever they saw CNN, BBC, and other international media reporting on the hostage crisis.

¶4. (C) The released hostages were told by their captors that future attacks on oil facilities and workers were likely, and

that these attacks would involve killing foreign workers as opposed to holding them hostage. One released hostage reported he saw the militants receive 23 brand new machine guns "from the Nigerian navy."

Hostage Negotiations

¶5. (S/NF) Mission members in Warri remain in contact with foreign journalists and Delta State Governor Ibori's negotiating team. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), through known militant Bello Oboko, sent the federal government a new list of ten conditions for hostage release. These conditions include: demilitarization of the Delta, economic empowerment programs, increased political participation for Ijaws, and the formation of a federal government negotiation committee capable of making policy-level decisions on behalf of the President. A full summary of the conditions will be reported shortly through SIMO channels.

¶6. (S/NF) Several GON sources told the Ambassador that the hostage crisis should be treated as a criminal case and divorced from any political dimension. They complained that the international media's showering of attention on the crisis would complicate negotiations.

Energy Update: Shell Facilities Still Closed

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¶7. (C) There is no change in the status of damaged or closed Shell facilities, and production remains reduced approximately 550,000 bpd. A Shell representative told Poloff they were considering restarting Sea Eagle Floating Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) offshore production facility capable of producing 115,000 bpd if the Nigerian navy would provide naval security. Press reports power generation remains down by approximately 1000 MW (of a total of 3200 MW nationwide).

Military Update

¶8. (S) There are no further updates on military plans in the region.

Media Update

¶9. (U) Media reports were dominated by accounts of MEND's set of conditions to the federal government for hostage release. The Vanguard listed 16 conditions while others listed 10. One newspaper reported the Itsekiri threatening multinational oil companies to vacate the area within 21 days or face new hostilities.

Consular Update

¶10. (C) There have been no reports of additional attacks on AmCits. One mission Conoff and FEST member are in Warri monitoring negotiations and prepared to assist with repatriation. The UK also has a consular officer in Warri to monitor negotiations and assist with repatriation.

HOWE